

# SERVICE

## USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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### SPOTLIGHT ON SENIOR CITIZENS

May is Senior Citizens Month. The Nation's approximately 20 million older citizens will be in the spotlight during Senior Citizens Month. A highlight of the month will be the launching of the first widespread activities looking toward the 1971 White House Conference on Aging. As a prologue to the Conference, older Americans will be meeting to plan community forums to be held throughout the U. S. in September of this year. Suggestions from these local meetings will be forwarded to Washington for use by the Conference delegates. Thus, older Americans -- the people most immediately concerned -- have an opportunity to suggest ways to improve life in later years.

Senior Citizens Get USDA Attention. The U. S. Department of Agriculture has long given attention to some of the basic and special needs of this special group of Americans. Under the Donated Foods Program, for example, the Food and Nutrition Service provides foods to non-profit organizations which serve nutritious, tasty, and low-cost meals to the elderly. Among these are the Meals on Wheels projects now operating in about 70 communities. Volunteers working in these projects prepare and deliver meals to shut-ins and other needy elderly citizens. Another is the lunch-at-school program now operating in Massachusetts communities where senior citizens attend school not to study, but to enjoy lunch at the school lunchroom.

Booklet Available. "Food Guide for Older Folks" (G-17), prepared by USDA's Agricultural Research Service, also deals with the food needs of senior citizens. It tells some ways to solve special food problems which often make it hard for an older person to be well fed. Copies of this booklet are available at 10 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

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Housing For The Elderly. A basic concern of senior citizens -- housing -- also concerns USDA. More than 16,700 housing units for persons aged 62 and older have been made possible through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farmers Home Administration. Senior citizens living in rural areas or in towns of up to 5,500 population are eligible for housing loans. Single copies of "Rental and Co-op Housing in Rural Areas," (PA-800), a booklet describing this program, are available from the Farmers Home Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.



## BEHIND THE SCENES

With Trace Minerals and Misunderstood Potatoes. A new consumer-oriented bulletin of the U. S. Department of Agriculture tells the story of the research behind the food action programs and of current nutrition research. In its ten chapters, "Toward the New" discusses the American diet -- is it good or bad?; the role of heredity spelled out in a story on carbohydrates and fats; keeping food safe to eat; the increasing importance of trace minerals; breeding for better meat; the comeback of the misunderstood potato; fresh fruits in a changing world; better school lunches; and new foods. The publication was developed by USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Copies of "Toward the New" (AIB-341) are available for \$1.00 from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402. Please use zipcodes.

## PLENTIFUL FOODS FOR MAY

Plentifuls Add Variety. Nothing makes a "dull dish" into an "enticing entre" like a good sauce. And nothing makes a saucier sauce than tomatoes. This versatile vegetable -- in any of its many canned forms -- is the feature of the Plentiful Foods list for May. From soup to paste, puree, catsup, juice, or sauce, canned tomato products can be used in a variety of easy-to-prepare, nutritious, and economical dishes. Other May Plentifuls include milk and dairy products, eggs, dry split peas, canned fruit cocktail, canned green beans, canned and frozen sweet corn, and canned apple sauce. The Plentiful Foods for June will include milk and dairy products, honey, eggs, and canned apple sauce.

## A DATE TO REMEMBER

Science of Survival. On August 9, 1970, some 3,000 food scientists from 50 to 60 countries will converge on Washington, D. C., for the Third International Congress of Food Science and Technology. They will be joined by leading world figures in government, education and industry. Their mandate is impressive: The continuing need to expand, improve, and conserve the world's food supply for the benefit of all mankind. The whole range of food problems will be probed-- production, processing, packaging, distribution, preparation, and utilization. Major consideration will also be focused on the political, economic, and cultural aspects of the world food problem. Co-sponsored by the International Committee of Food Science and Technology and the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the Congress has picked as its theme, SOS/70 -- Science of Survival.

## FOODS AID NAVAJO MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

Supplemental Foods Program. Mothers and children who receive medical care at the U.S. Public Health Service facilities at Gallup, Tohatchi, Shiprock, and Crown-point, New Mexico, are now receiving specially selected supplemental foods. The program is based on an agreement between the Navajo Tribal Council and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The agreement is like those between USDA and State governments. Under the program, USDA delivers such foods as canned juices, canned vegetables, milk, enriched farina, canned meat, and peanut butter to the Tribal Council. The Council assumes control of the foods and is responsible for storage and distribution. The Supplemental Foods Program, administered by the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, is designed for expectant mothers, new mothers, babies, and young children -- vulnerable groups who need specific nutrients. Close to 100,000 mothers and infants are participating in the program now operating in 180 areas of the Nation.

## BLANKET YOUR PROBLEMS WITH GROUND COVERS

Barrenwort to Wintergreen. Does your yard have bare areas? Does the traffic through your lawn or garden stray from the path? Does your landscaping suffer from monotony? The solutions to your problems may be ground covers. From blanketing bare spots to edging a pathway or adding landscape interest, ground covers have a variety of uses. In a new booklet prepared by horticulturists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, homeowners can find valuable information on how to plant, care for, and propagate 38 readily available ground covers -- from barrenwort to wintergreen. The booklet is liberally illustrated with photographs showing how different ground covers may be used as well as diagrams for planting the low-growing plants. A feature is a map showing the hardiness zone of each of the ground covers described in the publication. Single copies of "Growing Ground Covers" (HG-175) are available free from the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

## TALE OF A SPECIAL NEW TRAIL

Catalina Desert Trail. USDA's Forest Service has opened the Catalina Desert Trail -- the latest in a growing list of nature trails designed especially for the handicapped. The new trail, located at the Sabino Visitors Center on the Coronado National Forest in Arizona, includes a special feature for the visually handicapped -- a change from gravel to concrete on the pathway signals a stop at an interpretive station. When the concrete begins, a sightless person knows a guide rope is at hand to lead him to an exhibit. Braille signs at each stop describe the exhibit, many of which are "Touchables." These include a coyote and a badger -- both mounted to be safely touchable. The Catalina Desert Trail was built with the help of the Catalina Junior Women's Club of Tucson. It is the fifth trail for the handicapped developed and maintained by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

## THE CICADAS ARE COMING

A Humming Spring. Things will be humming in May and June if the cicadas emerge as expected. According to entomologists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1970 is the year to expect cicadas, or 17-year locust, to appear in larger than normal numbers. The incessant drumming and singing of cicadas are with us each year as different broods emerge from the ground annually. But the 10th brood, the largest and most widespread, is due to appear this spring. This abundant brood last appeared in 1953. Cicadas do not bite or sting people or animals, but they are capable of causing considerable damage or destroying young trees. This damage is from egg punctures made by mature females and from newly hatched nymphs which fall to the ground to burrow until they find a root from which to suck juice. Heavy cheesecloth or netting can be used to protect 1-or 2-year old trees from cicadas. Carbaryl will provide temporary protection.

## PONDERABLE POINTS

Out-To-Lunch. Rising incomes enable American consumers to buy more food services-- even though services increase the food bill. According to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, prices for food away from home have increased much more than food served at home. By December 1969, prices for restaurant meals were 50 percent higher than in 1957-59. Prices for all food at retail stores were up about 26 percent.



## WHOLESMOME INFORMATION

Questions. . . . Can hot dogs and bologna labeled "All Meat" contain cereal or dry milk extenders? How long can ground meats be kept refrigerated and frozen? And Answers. . . . "All Meat" hot dogs and bologna cannot contain extenders. To retain their quality, ground meats should be kept only 1 or 2 days refrigerated at 35-40°F but 2 or 3 months frozen at 0°F. Such information can be found in a set of five new leaflets published by the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Consumer and Marketing Service. Emphasis is on how to read labels; how to understand Federal inspection regulations for meat and poultry products; and how to handle these foods properly between store and table to protect wholesomeness. Titles of the leaflets are "Meat and Poultry--Wholesome for You" (G-170); "Meat and Poultry--Standards for You" (G-171); "Meat and Poultry--Labeled for You" (G-172); "Meat and Poultry--Clean for You" (G-173); and "Meat and Poultry--Care Tips for You" (G-174). Single sets of all five "Meat and Poultry Leaflets G-170 through G-174" are available on postcard request from the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

## SEARCHING NATURE'S MEDICINE CHEST

Collector's How-To-Do-It. Did you know that despite increases in production of synthetic drugs, natural plant drug materials are highly important to health in the United States? The use of natural plants of the forest do have medicinal qualities. Roots, bark, stems, leaves, flowers, fruit, and seeds of certain species are much in demand today. Most of these natural drug plants are found in the Southern Appalachian region. However, harvesting of these plants has fallen off in recent years. The problems of locating, collecting, and preparing plants for market is time-consuming. Collectors often don't know all the useful plant species or the best market for them. To help solve these problems, U. S. Department of Agriculture scientists at the Forest Service's Northeastern Forest Experiment Station have prepared a "Guide to Medicinal Plants of Appalachia." The booklet illustrates 126 medicinal plants of the region, provides information about where the plants grow, the parts used, reputed and recognized uses, the flowering period, and the common name. The publication, available in limited supply, can be requested from the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, 6816 Market Street, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania 19082.

## PUTTING THE SQUEEZE ON AVOCADOS

A New Machine for a New Product. Mash an avocado, flavor it with small amounts of lemon, salt, and some other condiments and you have guacamole -- a delightful dish to serve as a dip or a salad. Now, frozen guacamole, a new product developed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture in cooperation with industry, is being marketed in many parts of the Nation. And another "New" — a machine to peel avocados for use in frozen guacamole was recently reported by USDA. The machine--which separates avocado skins from the pulp by squeezing--is expected to utilize up to 2,250,000 pounds of avocados discarded annually because of imperfections that make them undesirable for the fresh market.

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SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Lillie Vincent, Editor of SERVICE, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Information, Washington, D. C. 20250. Please include your zipcode.